

# Community Charge

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## From the Coast

Most Canadians have now realized that our government is deaf when it comes to hearing our voices of anger, so the people of Port aux Basques have shown them their fists.

After the government closed down winter fishing in this Newfoundland town, depriving workers of enough work weeks to collect U.I., the people responded by smashing up the local office of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The action on the 12th of March involved 200 fishermen who politely asked all staff to leave the office. They then threw filing cabinets and computers out of windows and smashed photocopiers and radios.

When the government refused to respond to the growing anger, the local ferry was blocked in port by a flotilla of fishing boats. The ferry is owned by a crown corporation and left many people spending the night in the town. On the same day, 1000 people marched against budget cuts that will close the surgical wing of the local hospital. On the 18th a boat full of fish bound for an out of town processing plant was set adrift after its moorings were cut. This was to protest the lack of work at the local plants.

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## The Immigration Game

The breakdown of the Soviet Republic has brought a relaxation of the country's emigration policy, lifting restrictions off of Soviet Jews. However Soviet people cannot leave until they have gained acceptance into another country. Most Soviet Jews would like to immigrate to the United States or Western Europe. Countries like the U.S. who at one time pressured the Soviet Union to allow Jewish emigration are now refusing large numbers of immigrants claiming they do not have refugee status.

Many Soviet Jews see Israel as an option. Israel has opened up its borders to the new immigrants in hopes of building, as Prime Minister Shamir describes a 'Big Israel'. The ambition is to create a defiantly Jewish state, with a population that overwhelms the Palestinian presence. More and more Soviet Jews are realizing they are being pushed into the centre of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and now many are refusing to go, choosing to remain in the Soviet Union.

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## Euro-Racism

Racists are on the march again in Europe. The most obvious manifestation of this development, and the one that has received the most media attention, has been the major electoral success achieved by overtly racist groups, such as the National Front in France and the Republican Party in Germany. Less well known is how racism is being institutionalized into law.

Not since the 1930s has there been such an outpouring of clearly racist immigration and residence policies. Although no European country is immune from this tendency, of late it has been in France and Germany where government racism has made its biggest impact.

The unification of Germany has put immigrants in a perilous position. Even before unity the West German government was experimenting with repatriation schemes. Aimed at unemployed Turkish workers, these schemes which came into operation in 1983, offered immigrants \$7000 if they left the country immediately (\$3500 for every child). Now with a ready reserve of cheap East German labour prepared to fulfil

## Hamilton's Radical History

It is no surprise that in a place so dependant on large industry that the balance of power is not in the hands of those who produce- but in the hands of the few. Who know all too well that they determine how a city is shaped, and where we'll be placed within it. However there are times when this becomes unbearable, when survival simply isn't enough! Times when the balance of power must be upset- or at least shook up for awhile!

This was the case on November 24, 1906. The Hamilton Streetcar workers had gone on strike, they had been on strike for nineteen

days. Ten thousand people were rallying outside City Hall (then on James St. N.). The workers and their supporters were demanding better wages, and although Hamilton had supposedly some of the strongest labour "representation" in N. America, they were demanding union recognition. Those that ran the streetcar company (the Cataract Light & Traction Company) told employees that if they walked they would be fired. This didn't help the company's position that night, neither did the reading of the Riot Act on the part of the Wentworth County Sherriif. At

the same economic role once occupied by 'foreign' workers, non-European, non-white residents are even less welcome.

New 'guest worker' laws introduced last year, now make it possible for migrants from outside the European Community to be deported at any time for simply being out of work or without a home. Excluded from these regulations are immigrants from countries with which Germany has a 'special' relationship a predict

able list of white 'First World' nations: U.S.A., Canada, Israel, Australia and New Zealand.

The racist basis of current German immigration policy is nowhere more explicit than in the process whereby 'ethnic' Germans from Eastern Europe are admitted to the country. Such individuals need to present papers compiled by the Nazis, documenting their family's racial origins. Those who the Nazis considered to have German 'blood' or merely some

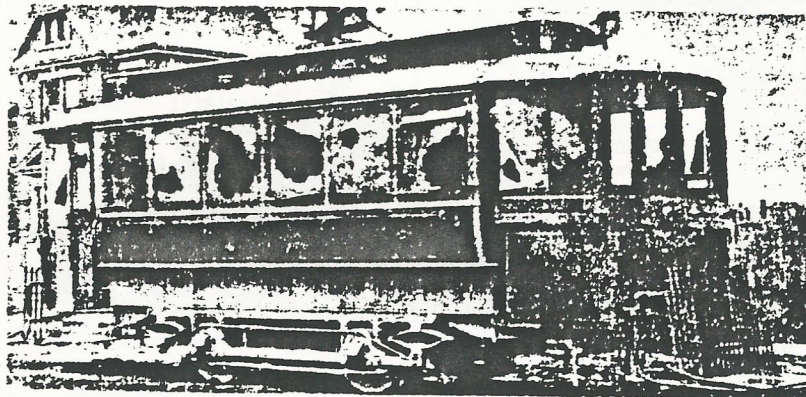




which point the cops and over one hundred soldiers pushed back the crowd, thus starting a riot (as is always the case!). Fight & chase scenes occurred throughout the downtown area. With store front windows smashed, the much disputed streetcars were lit aflame and barricades were erected to protect the demonstrators. The cops & soldiers (many of whom had fought in the Boar War.) attacked with clubs and guns fitted with bayonets!! Most of the people that were attacked were innocent (some of whom weren't even at the rally!). The streets were fought over for many

hours. With 200 hurt and 32 arrested (mainly labour and local activists). This turned out to be a victory for the strikers, gaining much public support in the face of this brutality. Their demands were met a few days later.

This was one of the first confrontations of this scale



in Hamilton. We will be bringing more of Hamilton's radical history in the future. The question is with the (un)balance of power still against us, and the economic situation for the poor deteriorating... Will history repeat itself?

German 'blood' are split up into different categories. Amazingly, in areas of the country governed by the Social Democrats (Hamburg, Bremen and Saarland), people unfortunate enough to be in the latter category (half of whom are Polish) have recently been deemed not German enough to qualify for citizenship. Thus the legacy of Nazism lives on through the deeds of Germany's mainstream 'socialist' party. And these are the people who claim to be opposing the rise of fascism in Germany!

The complicity of the mainstream left with racist migration policies is also evident in France. The French Communist Party, which represents a major, but declining political force in the country, has consistently supported French government policy to end immigration and to 'protect French jobs for French workers'.

Indeed, the antipathy of one Communist mayor (in Vitry) to North African workers was so strong that he and his 'comrades' bulldozed a migrant hostel to the ground.

This kind of activity, from a party that claims to be anti-racist, paved the way for a series of tough immigration laws introduced in 1986. The first deportation carried out under the new laws was of 101 West Africans, who were chained together and put aboard a specially chartered aircraft. Since then deportations have continued at an alarming rate, 17,000 individuals being removed from the country in 1987 alone.

However, immigrant workers and their children are fighting back. Last October saw Lyon erupt in violent rioting as Afro-French youth fought a local police

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## The Coast Continued..

The government has responded by reopening the fishing season. However, many workers will still not be able to collect U.I. As the economic situation worsens for



us all we can look at how this community has fought back and got the rotten-ass politicians to listen.



## Romero Remembered

Join members of the Salvadoran community in remembrance of

Oscar Romero, murdered by the U.S. backed Salvadoran army, with a procession of songs from the Misa



Campesina, on Saturday March 23rd at 4:30 PM. Also planned are a pot-luck dinner with speakers and music from El Salvador. For more information phone 528-7481

## Racism Con't

force renowned for its racism. Moreover, around 4000 self-help associations have been set up by the immigrant community, many with the explicit aim of combating racism.

Yet for all this activity, the real power remains on the side of the governments. Racism is being used by them to define Europe as white territory. It is governments that are the main instruments of this oppression and it is governments that are one of its main beneficiaries. Those who struggle against racism and those who struggle against the state must realize they are fighting the same battle.

## Immigration Continued

Israel has imposed censorship on news about the Soviet immigrants to downplay the negative publicity. The immigrants that do arrive in the country are placed under restrictions, that do not allow them to leave the country.

The Israeli government has offered attractive benefit to counter these tough measures like interest-free mortgages, free health insurance, etc. The government's goal is to encourage settlement.

A great controversy has arisen over Israel's plan to resettle the Soviet immigrants in the occupied territories. But to date the resettlement has not happened. The majority of Soviet immigrants, 200,000 in 1990 alone, are being settled in East Jerusalem. This territory which was Palestinian land prior to the 1967 war, is not recognized by Israel as an occupied territory.

The result of this flood of immigration is a massive housing shortage in East Jerusalem, which has created much homelessness and increased racial tension. The Eastern part of the city is home to 140,000 Palestinians. The result of the overcrowding in the city has caused increased competition for housing and jobs. This has erupted in racial violence. The new immigrants are finding conditions in East Jerusalem so unbearable that they are eventually moving to the West Bank.

The Israeli government has promised not to directly settle new immigrants in the occupied territories. But Soviet immigrants who have gained citizenship (which amazingly only takes one year), may settle anywhere in the country. Many are now being forced to choose the occupied territories. The Soviet immigrants are effectively being used as pawns in a political game. The Israeli government is achieving its goal of a larger Jewish state with the resettlement of the occupied territories at the expense of the new immigrants, who are being forced into a situation of homelessness and violence. In essence, the Israeli government is exploiting the social implication of Soviet immigration for its own political ends.

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*COMMUNITY CHARGE covers local and international news from an anti-statist perspective. If you wish to contribute too, or receive this newsletter, please send an SASE to:*

COMMUNITY CHARGE  
P.O. Box 57069  
Jackson Station  
Hamilton, Ont.  
L8P 4W9

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